

12 May 1970

Dear Harold (cc Roffman):

A friend in Massachusetts sent me a copy of Sprague's article in Computers and Automation. There is nothing new in it, and the old stuff is handled very poorly. There are many claims that he can prove much, but in fact he proves little. Some things are very bad. His list of photos is worth having in published form, but I already have the list from him privately.

He makes much of the Dal-Tex second floor window in Altgens, so I wrote and informed him of recent correspondence that developed from observation of Roffman's version of the picture. It may make no difference to him. I believe that I had previously written to him and told him what proofs indicate that the Foley picture was taken a day or two after the shooting, and not in the morning before the shooting, but he lists Foley as being taken about 10 a.m. on 22 Nov.

If you want this copy, tell me. I wrote to the publisher and asked for the issue with the article. When I receive that, I can let you have this. Perhaps I'll route it through Roffman, since he might want to see it and make a copy of Sprague's list of photos.

He is still riding that errant nag, Farewell America; makes special mention of it as an "important reference book". God!

There is a bit on Jim Hicks that by itself makes Sprague (and others) seem a fool. Hicks "showed up voluntarily in Garrison's office. Garrison and one of the researchers, Jones Harris, suddenly realized that they had seen his picture before, as one of the persons in Dealey Plaza near the time of the fatal shooting (See Fig. 11)... The photograph Harris and Garrison had seen is a picture of Jim Hicks in Dealey Plaza just after the shots, with his radio in his left rear trouser pocket and antenna hanging down outside. (See the foreground of Figure 11.)" Figure 11, by the way is Willis' seventh slide that shows "Hicks" with his back to the camera. What amazing powers of recognition Garrison and Harris have! And what of Sprague's mentality, for thinking that any sane person is going to swallow that crap?

Skolnick: I am glad you are suing to stop him. There is really nothing good that can be done now, but your approach has certain virtues that others lack. Of course you will now be dubbed an Establishment hack for impeding the course of justice. Even now I can name your enemies among the critics-- Penn Jones' editorial on Skolnick is the harbinger of sentiment about the incident, I am sure. Others will feel as he does, believing what they want to believe, not what they must. Fuck 'em.

I hope that it won't cost you too much. Regretably, there is nothing that I can do to help in that.

Cyanosis: This takes a while to set in. When Perry first saw LHO, he was "very blue". I don't think it's possible to "get" Bieberdorf for smothering LHO, since the cyanosis seems to have developed as the result of massive and rapid internal bleeding. But surely the blueness must have set in ~~while~~ while Bieber. was pumping oxygen. That would be a sure indication of a lot of rapid bleeding, the very thing that Bieb. was aggravating during his ministrations. I would work on Bieb. from that angle. Since he knew LHO was getting pure oxygen in his lungs, the sure sign of lack of oxygen would indicate that he was not getting it from the blood. In spite of his inexperience, I cannot regard B as innocent of deliberate wrongdoing.

399 pictures(Ridge): I have now studied these as well as I can. I cannot decisively refute or support your opinion, for the pix are not clear enough to make definite assertion possible. You could be right, but in the present state of knowledge, I recommend caution and further search for a proper picture that will definitely confirm or refute.

Let's suppose, for the time being, that you are right. This new revelation does not necessarily imply illicit intent, and strongly suggests no intent at all to alter the evidence, no matter what the effect.

The area in question, the "ridge" is composed of very soft metal. The "ridge" is the topmost portion of a very thin wall of that very soft metal. The thinness and softness of this area renders it exceedingly vulnerable to the sort of changes that you see. A very slight brushing against even a soft object almost certainly would disrupt this fragile surface-- even a little bit of jiggling inside the container could easily do it.

It may be, too, that substance was not actually removed from the "ridge", but that the minutest bit of metal was displaced, or slightly worn down by the normal processes of attrition.

What I am saying is not merely that it is easy to disrupt such a thin, soft surface, but that it is very difficult to keep it from being disturbed in the way that the pictures indicate. If any substance is missing, it cannot be more than a small fraction of a grain. The surface of the latest picture, as far as I can tell, does not suggest that any substance was deliberately removed by cutting it off with a knife or similar instrument. A better picture may suggest otherwise, but presently I do not see anything illicit in the treatment of that area.

399 residues: There is a hidden pitfall in Nichols' suggestion about tests for proteins, things that would belie the validity of such tests as they apply to the question whether 399 ever injured a human. For one thing, the bullet was found on a bloody stretcher, and it may have been slightly besmeared by that blood (though I doubt it, since Frazier said there were no residues visible. Think in terms of such a small quantity that it would not be readily visible). Then there is the possibility that the bullet could be deliberately smeared even now, so as to get positive results from such tests.

The tests would be valuable, but they can be evidentiary only if they prove negative. That is, if there is no evidence of blood, then the bullet hurt no one; if there is evidence of blood, then we know nothing more than before-- it would prove nothing. But negative results would prove plenty.

Nichols: There seems nothing more that you can do about this matter than you have already done. To the degree possible, I suggest that you take no further steps to contact him and decline any efforts he might subsequently make to contact you. You do not need him, but he needs you-- even though he may not now admit it.

I do not think that his activities recently are innocent, and considering his failure to respond to your reasonable queries, I see no reason why you should bother seeking an innocent explanation. I do not think he is out to injure you as much as to serve himself richly-- though it may well have an injurious effect.

As I indicated before, I did not mind being used by Nichols, and gladly provided him with helpful things that I then thought were for a good cause. I do mind now, however, for it seems not just

*Weight
found,
trace, really
cotton*

PM

a question of being used for his benefit, but of being badly used to my detriment.

Composition of bullets: If certain sets of bullets are made from the same ~~molten~~ batch of molten lead alloy, then any two bullets from ~~that~~ those sets will have identical metallic composition. If another batch of molten lead alloy were mixed in apparently the same proportion as the first batch, then bullets made from the second batch would not ~~have~~ have the same metallic comp as bullets made from the first. The differences would be minuscule, but they would be detectable-- especially by recently developed processes of analysis.

Trent Gough: A 10-person picket line around CBS? Good grief! In my view, Gough fits perfectly Agnew's designation as an effete, impudent snob. Imagine now, a whole 10-person corps of effete, impudent snobs. Right on, Spiro!

JE Ray: The new material is excellent news to have. In spite of your good and cogent arguments in Coup 2, I still ~~wonder~~ doubt the Huie was acting as his own agent. I think there were others pulling Huie's strings.

WIBJ-TV: I caught ~~this~~ LBJ's re-writing of history, as you call it. Some of it scares me. I'm thinking of his "international conspiracy" thing. It may be the harbinger of what I have long suspected will happen: when they know they can no longer sustain the no-conspiracy business, they will sure as hell try to make it look like a communist conspiracy, something which many people do now believe, or are more than willing to believe.

Mail of importance just came from Roffman, but I am out of time now and will have to answer later.

Still,

Rick